What is claimed is:

1.   A computer-implemented method of finding the closest match between a first object and N objects comprising the steps of:

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selecting a small number M of the N objects;

for each of the objects M determining its metric distance to all the other N objects;

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for each of the objects M, making an ordered list of the metric distances between that object and all the other N objects;

determining the metric distances between the first object and each of the M objects,

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determining the metric distances between the first object and the objects on the ordered list associated with the object M that has the shortest metric distance between it and the first object,

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said metric distances being determined beginning with the object on the list that has the shortest metric distance between it and the object M and continuing such determination with objects having increasingly greater metric distances from

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the object M until an object is reached that has a metric distance from the object M that is more than twice the metric distance from the first object to the object M.

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